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Near East/North Africa Report

(FOUO 41/81)



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NEAR EAST/NORTH AFRICA REPORT

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ALGERIA

SOCIALIST VANGUARD PARTY THREATENS TO WITHDRAW SUPPORT FROM BENDJEDID

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French No 1872, 25 Sep 81 p 2431

/Text/ The "Socialist Vanguard Party" (a clandestine but tolerated communist party) has let it be known that it may withdraw its support for President Chadli Bendjedid. One reason for the party's position may be the Algerian Government's supposed intention of undertaking a long-term effort to diversify its arms suppliers. At present the USSR supplies 90 percent of Algeria's military materiel.

Discussions between Algiers and some Western countries are reportedly already under way. The first items on the agenda are believed to be replacing the Algerian army's Soviet "Antonov" aircraft with Western transport planes and the acquisition of troop transport helicopters in Europe.

Over the longer term the plan would be to replace most of the Algerian fighter armada, which largely consists of MiG's of various types, with American or European fighters.

Another reason for the dissatisfaction of the Socialist Vanguard Party is that in recent months several of its militants were excluded from holding responsible positions in mass organizations, including the UNJA /National Union of Algerian Youth/ and UGTA /General Union of Algerian Workers/.

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ALGERIA

NO AGREEMENT REACHED ON GAS NEGOTIATIONS WITH FRANCE, ITALY

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French No 1872, 25 Sep 81 p 2431

/Text/ Two negotiators for the Italian state oil group, ENI /National Hydrocarbons Agency/ have returned to Rome without coming to an agreement on the price of the Algerian natural gas that was supposed to be delivered to Italy starting late this year (see MTM of 18 September 1981 p 2375). The initial contract provided that Algeria would gradually increase its deliveries to 12.5 billion cubic meters of natural gas per year over a period of 25 years.

Problems over the sale price appeared last year and, according to Italian observers, have become more serious since the change of government in France last May.

Algeria has formally asked Italy to agree to index the price of the gas to the price of oil, in accordance with a formula like the one found in the agreement reached last winter by SONATRACH /National Company for the Transport and Marketing of Hydrocarbons/ and the Belgian company, Distrigaz. That agreement provided for indexing the delivery price of 5 billion cubic meters of natural gas per year over a 25-year period.

According to the Italian newspaper, REPUBBLICA (socialist), Algeria held firmly to its original offer to sell its gas at a base price of \$5 per million BTU's (British Thermal Units), to be augmented in accordance with an indexing provision that would gradually bring the price up to about \$7.

These very figures, obtained from well-informed sources early last summer and reported by AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, were termed "inaccurate" by the Algerian Ambassador to Rome, Mr Oman Oussedik. Observers maintain, however, that they are close to the Algerian proposals. If such were the case, ENI would have to pay a yearly bill of \$3.5 billion for purchases of Algerian natural gas.

REPUBBLICA explains Algeria's intransigence by the proximity of President Francois Mitterrand's upcoming visit to Algiers. "Algeria is playing for time and betting on an agreement with Paris," was the paper's headline.

The Italian newspaper believes France will be forced to yield, at least in part, to the Algerian request, and thus to accept an increase in the price of methane.

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France sees the problem of Algerian gas prices in the much more general context of its overall relations with Algeria, as Mr Michel Jobert, the minister of foreign trade, has underlined. Mr Jean-Marcel Jeanneney, the French president's personal representative, met with Mr Yala, the Algerian minister of financial affairs, on 15 September in Algiers. According to the Algerian minister of foreign affairs, the two "wise men" charged by their respective governments to find a solution to the problem of gas prices, met in a working session and "proceeded to an initial appraisal of the question, within the general framework of Algerian-French relations." This first meeting was described as "cordial and useful" by the Algerian minister of foreign affairs.

No indication was given as to the date on which Jeanneney and Yala have agreed to meet again, this time in Paris. But it is reasonable to suppose that negotiations on the price of the gas will be concluded before Francois Mitterrand's official visit to Algeria in November. Resolution of this problem, according to sources in Algiers, "will doubtless open up new prospects for overall cooperation between Algiers and Paris."

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ALGERIA

EQUIPMENT, CONSUMER GOODS DOMINATE IMPORTS FROM EEC

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French No 1872 25 Sep 81 p 2432

/Text/ Mr Edgar Pisani, commissioner of development for the European Economic Community, met with Algerian leaders during an official visit 13 September to examine the trends in economic relations between Algeria and the EEC. Those relations have been defined, since 1978, in an agreement covering trade and development. The financial portion of the agreement provides for the Community to contribute financially to various Algerian projects in the field of agriculture and vocational training.

In the trade sector, Algeria remains the EEC's biggest customer in Africa and the fourth largest supplier. The balance of trade favors the EEC (by more than 1 billion UCE /European Currency Units /?/ in 1979). Fuels account for 97 percent of Algeria's exports to the EEC, while EEC sales to Algeria are dominated by equipment goods and consumer products.

In a statement to EL MOUDJAHID, Mr Pisani stated that the EEC would not try to solve problems that exist "without taking into account those of Africa, especially those of North Africa." Discussing the consequences for the Maghreb countries of the expansion of the EEC to include Spain and Greece, Mr Pisani conceded that this enlargement "might force us to take a fresh look at our relations with the countries of the Maghreb in particular, with the Mediterranean countries in general. Faced with the political necessity of enlarging, we must have an economic policy that does not require one group to pay for the benefits we would confer on others."

He said that he would examine with his Algerian interlocutors the question of "how the Algerian economy will find a way to evolve in tandem with the European economies within the new European dimensions in such a way that everyone profits," noting the fact that Algeria continues to maintain, as it has done for several years now, that the country's sales to the EEC must not be dominated exclusively by hydrocarbons.

Mr Pisani also noted that the EEC was obliged, over the long term, to "rethink its relations with Africa, the ACP /African-Caribbean-Pacific/ countries and Algeria in the overall context of the great North-South dialogue, in which Europe must play a quite unique role, since it is not only a power on the world scene but also an economic and political force."

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ALGERIA

BRIEFS

ARGENTINE WHEAT--A \$47 million contract for Argentina to supply Algeria with wheat and corn was just signed by the two countries, according to Argentine diplomatic sources in Algiers, who disclosed the information on 14 September. The contract calls for Argentina to deliver 200,000 tons of wheat, 60,000 tons of corn and 5,000 tons of kidney beans to Algeria in the first half of 1982. The contract is an integral part of a 5-year framework agreement which also calls for further deliveries of wheat and corn to Algeria, the same source said. Meanwhile, technical negotiations between the two countries began on Algeria's purchase of 10-12,000 tons of meat and the installation in Algeria of refrigeration units, slaughterhouses and cold storage facilities with technical assistance from Argentine industry. /Text/ /Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French No 1872, 25 Sep 81 p 2431/ /COPYRIGHT: Rene Moreux et Cie Paris 1981/ 9516

SOVIETS TO BUILD DAMS--On 10 September, following a 4-day meeting of the Algerian-Soviet subcommission on hydraulic works, an agreement was signed giving the Soviet Union responsibility for construction of Dam No. 3 at Draa Al Mizan. The Algerian and Soviet experts also reviewed progress on completion of four other big dams called for by the 5-year plan (1980-1984). In other matters, the experts examined progress being made on studies related to the master plans for hydraulic improvements in the Annaba region, the eastern part of the country and South Atlas. They also agreed on a new well-drilling program on the scale of several thousand linear meters, with the aim of increasing potable water supply capacity in southern Algeria. /Text/ /Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French No 1872, 25 Sep 81 p 2431/ /COPYRIGHT: Rene Moreux et Cie Paris 1981/ 9516

EUROPEAN FINANCING FOR FISHERMEN--The European Commission decided 15 September to provide Algeria a grant of 600,000 ecus to help finance the expansion of two training centers for marine fishermen, one located at Annaba, the other at Beni-Saf. Algerian authorities have decided, in effect, to correct intersectoral imbalances brought about by the concentration of investment in the past in the fields of heavy industry and hydrocarbons. The 1980-1984 /5-year/ plan calls for development of the primary and social sectors as part of the effort to restore balance. In the fishing sector, the catch currently amounts to 400,000 tons per year, and the goal is to double that figure by 1984. This presupposes the training of additional personnel, along with the acquisition of boats and building of infrastructure such as canneries and repair shops. There will be training at different levels. The Community's project involves the training of basic technicians, thanks to the provision of equipment for the facilities (technology, fishery, seamanship, sheet-metal works, machinery, refrigeration, etc.) and the sending of two teachers. The capacity of the two schools will thus be increased from 130 to 200 students. /Text/ /Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French No 1872, 25 Sep 81 p 2432/ /COPYRIGHT: Rene Moreux et Cie Paris 1981/ 9516
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IRAN

IRAN ARRESTS PROMINENT INTELLECTUALS

PM201427 London THE GUARDIAN in English 20 Oct 81 p 9

[Report by Liz Thurgood: "Khomeyni Gaols Writers Who Opposed the Shah"]

[Text] Among the thousands of Iranians caught up in the continuing wave of mass arrests and persecution is a small but highly vocal group of intellectuals. Many were among the more active of the shah's opponents, were imprisoned in the royals gaols, and were tortured for their opposition.

Unlike their less illustrious cell-mates, several of the writers and poets now held by Ayatollah Khomeyni's gaolers have become well known to human rights groups in the West. Earlier this month, Amnesty International asked the Iranian prime minister to receive a delegation seeking to halt the executions in Iran.

Because of a dearth of reliable news reporting from Iran, it is now known how politically active the intellectuals have been against the regime in recent months. Most were members of the highly-politicised writers association, whose headquarters were seized in June.

Neither is it known what, if any, charges have been made against them, or where they are being held. Evin Prison in north Tehran, is a possibility.

Among the most prominent is Homa Nategh, a historian and former professor at Tehran University's faculty of letters, who suffered badly at the hands of the shah's regime. In one incident during the anti-shah student upheavals late in 1977, she was kidnapped and badly beaten by police within half-an-hour of being released from questions.

Unconfirmed reports say that her husband, Nasser Paknejad, who made common cause with many of Iran's intelligentsia. A founder member of the leftwing Palestine group--a guerrilla organisation set up in the late 1960's to fight the shah--he served 10 years in gaol, where he was subjected to 18 days of torture that reportedly included a mock execution, floggings, and finger-nail pulling.

Paknejad emerged from the ordeal six months before the revolution. An incurable optimist, he threw his energies into new democratic front politics.

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The latest arrival in gaol is Reza Baraheni, who was seized last week as he was leaving Tehran University. A well-known writer, he gave a vivid account of his time in the shah's gaols, and accompanying torture, in the crowned cannibals. Soon after his release, he went to the U.S. to found CAIFI (Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran). CAIFI's patrons included Kate Millett, Arthur Miller, and Ramsey Clark, a former attorney-general.

Other writers and poets now languishing in the Islamic Republic's gaols reportedly include Medhi Parham, Shanoush Parsipour, and Akbar Malekian. Dozens of others have gone underground.

The only known execution is that of Sa'id Sultanpour, who was shot by firing squad four months ago. The playwright had been charged with armed uprising.

The writers and poets now in gaol make up only a tiny fraction of the total arrests made since the end of June, when impeachment proceedings were started against the ayatollah's first president, Mr Bani-Sadr. The influence of human rights activists is not what it used to be. The latest amnesty proposal to send a delegation for talks has been turned down by Ayatollah Khomeyni. Amnesty "only wanted to condemn Iran and crush the Islamic Republic," he was quoted as saying.

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LEBANON

ARAB ASSISTANCE SOUGHT FOR SETTLING COUNTRY'S CRISIS

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic No 237, 28 Aug-3 Sep 81 pp 27-28

[Article: "Ball of South Lebanon Returns to Arab Court; Sarkis Wagers on Final Months"]

[Text] Beirut--Is Lebanon, which is moving in the direction of the Arab family in search of aid to dress its wounds, seeking a security or a political umbrella or financial aid? Why has this particular time been chosen for the visit of Lebanese Prime Minister Shafiq al-Wazzan to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and for the messages carried by the ministers dispatched to the Arab kings and president? Is there an Arab consensus for the Lebanese security to continue in its present condition in accordance with the Riyadh and Cairo summit resolutions?

A foreign correspondent in Beirut asked a southern Lebanese official last week: Why this sudden Lebanese enthusiasm for an Arab summit? The official answered:

"The definite fact that stands behind all that is occurring in Lebanon is the 'catastrophe of southern Lebanon.' There is no way to finding a solution to the Lebanese crisis without recognizing the dimensions and seriousness of this fact within whose framework falls all that has happened and that is happening in the South. In Lebanon, there is one problem. By solving this problem, all the other problems will be solved. This problem is called the South. Unless an end is put to Israel's ambitions in the South and unless the sovereignty of the Lebanese state is spread over the southern territories, we will be futilely seeking a way out of our crisis. It seems as if the Lebanese government has realized that all the current efforts and movements will be futile unless the solution starts from the South. I am not stressing the South because I am tied to it by emotion or relationship but because I know for certain that the parties fighting in Lebanon and around it have used and are still using the South and its tragedy like 'Uthman's shirt' to justify their intransigent and convulsive positions on the Lebanese arena and to cover up their strange intervention in some purely domestic affairs. The South is a constant pretext for these parties and the south's complex situation gives the combatants and those seeking power the justifications to persist in their transgression and their recklessness."

This politician's statements confirm the contents of an official report submitted to the higher authorities and stating verbatim: "The continued presence of southern Lebanon as a sole arena for the Arab-Israeli conflict, as a testing ground for the disputing parties and as a field for power display will foil every endeavor to save

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Lebanon and will obstruct any solution proposed for ending the crisis, not to mention the danger of failing to deal with the situation there because it is not unlikely that the South will turn into a thunderbolt that will touch off an explosion in the area whose consequences will go beyond the geographic and political sphere of Lebanon."

The true nature of the current official Lebanese movement can be concluded from a careful study of some of the details of this report. The real dimensions of the developments and events in southern Lebanon can be concluded through examining the positions of the disputing parties in Lebanon. The South is the main and the only battlefield with Israel at present. It is the main pretext which Syria is using to keep and increase its forces in Lebanon. The South has become the "barometer" of domestic security and from the south the days of calm and the days of explosion can be predicted.

Transformation, not Development

Because the Lebanese government is aware of the true dimensions of the problem of the south, it has viewed the recent cease-fire declared indirectly between Israel and the Palestinian resistance as an important transformation and as a qualitative leap. If what has recently happened in southern Lebanon is considered a significant development by the political observers, then the Lebanese government sees it as a major transformation in the course of the current conflict between the Arabs and Israel and as a point at which one must pause to read the implications.

Though observation of the cease-fire has restored the Lebanese government to its senses and has drawn its attention to the need to proceed from Southern Lebanon to urge the Arabs to formulate a unified strategy, regardless of whether it is a peace or a war strategy, and though Israel has for the first time resorted to cutting off the means of communication between the capital, Beirut, and the South and has blown up bridges, struck al-Zahrani refinery and focused its shelling on vital facilities, Israel has also accepted for the first time a cease-fire conditional upon Palestinian approval.

This political situation emanating from the recent events and the military situation created by the aggression have both made the Lebanese government initiate a comprehensive Arab movement rising to the level of the developments. If Israel, with its aggressions, has caused the meetings of the followup committee to be unable to keep up with the crisis, then it behooves Lebanon to go beyond the conventional methods of dealing with crises and to initiate a qualitative movement relying on the elements that have emerged, the most important being southern Lebanon's exposure to a real war, whether in terms of losses in lives and property or in terms of the dimensions of this war, and Israel's and the Palestinians' acceptance of the cease-fire. This acceptance gives Lebanon the right to make some gains in turn, beginning with a national reconciliation protected by the umbrella of an Arab consensus.

Race With Explosion

Prime Minister al-Wazzan has returned from his visit and sources close to the prime minister assert that he has succeeded in persuading Saudi Arabia and Kuwait of the need to hold an Arab summit--a summit whose date is expected to be moved closer--so that it may be possible to deal with the developments in the Lebanese situation

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before it is too late and before the Lebanese arena encounters a new explosion that may jumble the cards, upturn the roles and make it extremely difficult to find firm solutions by way of dialogue.

It is worth noting here that the government decided on its movement only after it had become certain of numerous facts that have made it more strongly convinced of the need to return to the Arab solution emanating from the highest Arab authority [Arab summit]. This is why the call for the summit has emerged. The most important facts that have motivated the recent movement, are the following:

First, the discovery by officials that the United States doesn't focus its efforts on dealing with the heart of the Lebanese crisis and that the U.S.'s sole concern is to cool off the heated front in the area so that it may be able to set a fixed policy toward the Middle East crisis and implement the last part of the Camp David accords.

Second, Lebanon's disappointment insofar as expansion of the area in which the UN emergency forces are deployed is concerned. In addition to requiring a new resolution by the Security Council, such expansion also requires Palestinian and Arab approval, especially in the wake of Israel's demand that the Palestinians be moved away from its borders. This demand creates new problems and leads to further obstruction of the state's authority internally.

Third, the fear of postponement of the meeting of the Arab Followup Committee. Such postponement leads to creating a state of vacuum insofar as the state's exercising of its responsibilities is concerned and encourages a new flareup in the situation, especially since great hope has been attached to the Followup Committee's activities.

Fourth, taking advantage of the situation arising in the South as a result of the cease-fire, and exerting efforts conducive to entrenching this situation and to preventing Israel from resuming its aggressions.

Fifth, securing a political cover capable of bringing success to the endeavors of the Followup Committee or of giving this committee additional Arab momentum and support.

But amidst a number of local, Arab and international concerns and even though the various circles are convinced that no miracles will take place during President Ilyas Sarkis' term and that nobody will offer anything during the remaining part of President Sarkis' term, political circles famous for being well-informed have been propagating rumours for sometime to the effect that the Lebanese situation is on the threshold of numerous positive aspects and that the reports circulated by some sources that there will be an imminent new explosion in the situation are no more than a well-studied scheme aimed at restoring the atmosphere of fear, intimidation and confusion. The long truce has begun and all that remains is to prepare the solutions to save Lebanon and to transform its truce into lasting peace.

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LEBANON

SYRIANS BLAMED FOR FRENCH AMBASSADOR'S ASSASSINATION

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic No 239, 11-17 Sep 81 pp 24-25

[Article: "Delamare Assassinated in Zahlah 5 Months Ago"]

[Text] Exclusive Report by AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI--When Louis Delamare, the French ambassador to Lebanon, rested from his trouble, when a French aircraft carried his body to his home in a village near the French city of Deauville and when investigation of the circumstances of his death started, AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI was gathering the first threads of the incident, which was not published in the daily press, from political and diplomatic sources and is now publishing this information here exclusively.

The story begins with the events in the city of Zahlah and with the violent Syrian shelling to which the city was exposed 5 months ago.

At the time, the French diplomacy, on the strength of the special instructions and interest of ex-President Valery Giscard d'Estaing, exerted concerted efforts to put an end to the siege struck around Zahlah by the Syrian deterrence forces and to persuade Damascus to stop shelling the civilians. Francois Poncet, the former French Minister of Foreign Affairs, hinted at the time in various statements to the need for an international initiative and for a European movement to put an end to the bloody events in Zahlah.

In light of this French diplomatic interest, French Ambassador Delamare moved at more than one level in an endeavor to find common grounds among the various parties involved to end the crisis.

This French interest and movement on the Lebanese arena did not please the Syrian regime, especially since Delamare had succeeded in bolstering his connections with the various parties involved and in gaining greater friendship and appreciation in the various Lebanese circles, which is something that gave him the ability to move freely and to maneuver quickly. Col Muhammad Ghanim, the head of the Syrian intelligence in Lebanon, resented Delamare's movements in particular, considering them an unacceptable intervention in domestic affairs and an intervention undermining the Syrian regime's authority and schemes in Lebanon and so he hastened to Damascus to discuss his concerns.

Relying on well-informed and indisputable sources, AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI asserts that Ghanim met in the Syrian capital with President Hafiz al-Asad in the presence of the

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intelligence chiefs of staff, including 'Ali Duba and Muhammad al-Khuli, and of Rif'at al-Asad. Muhammad Ghanim said to President al-Asad: "The matter of the French ambassador has become a source of annoyance for us. He moves and maneuvers at more than one level and he has initiated a dialogue with various national and Palestinian leaderships, especially with Walid Junblat. He has also opened other lines with the leaderships of the eastern area, thus obstructing our work."

Ghanim then told those present: "I have come here to review this serious matter before posing this question: 'How do we deal with the ambassador?'" One of those present suggested assassination as a fundamental solution capable not only of bringing about the end of an active ambassador who understands the Lebanese game but also capable of making France understand that it is not easy to maneuver behind Damascus' back. But Muhammad al-Khuli objected to this solution, saying: 'Let us intimidate him first.' President al-Asad nodded his head in approval."

It is thus that the intimidation of Ambassador Delamare started: Threats from here and there, shelling his residence, mining a car belonging to the embassy and so forth.

But Delamare was not intimidated and did not back down on his consultations and his efforts to put an end to the fighting in Lebanon. Delamare realized important accomplishments, such as arranging a meeting between leaders from Beirut's eastern and western areas. This annoyed the Syrians greatly and intensified their wrath at the ambassador. They considered his movement an intervention in their internal affairs. The story did not end here. Sometime afterwards, to be specific, a few days after the hijacking of the Iranian (French-made) boat which was heading from the French port of Cherbourg to Tehran, the Iranian ambassador in Damascus met with a prominent Syrian security official and voiced his complaints and observations regarding France, saying: "Paris has received Bani-Sadr and Rajavi and has granted the boat hijackers the right to political asylum. So, how should we deal with the socialist French government?"

The Syrian security official did not hesitate in offering his advice to his interlocutor--advice which took the form of the question:

"What do you think of kidnapping the French ambassador in Beirut? Ask your government and then contact me."

The Syrian official then reviewed to his visitor the merits of this act:

"We will do to Delamare what we did to Jordanian Ambassador Hisham al-Muhaysin. This act will create an uproar amidst French public opinion. Bani-Sadr and Rajavi will consequently find themselves compelled, especially from a moral standpoint, to leave France.

Ultimately, the French government may find itself compelled, under the pressure of domestic public opinion, to hand over the boat hijackers.. But what is certain is that France will think twice before receiving (an opponent of the Iranian regime) after the ambassador is kidnapped. Moreover, France will curtail activities of the opponents present in its territories."

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The Iranian ambassador in Damascus congratulated the Syrian security official for this "advice" and promised to convey it to Tehran immediately. The Iranian response came quickly: "Yes to the kidnapping."

The same Syrian security official was informed of the Iranian response and the official proceeded to tell his superiors immediately: "We have killed two birds with one stone. We will get rid of Delamare and please Iran at the same time."

This official added: "There is no doubt that suspicions and accusations will be directed at Iran because of the tense Iranian-French relations in this particular phase." Thus, a secret decision was issued to carry out the kidnapping or liquidation operation should it be impossible for the kidnapping to succeed for one reason or another.

Thus, the operation was carried out at a distance of just 30 meters from a roadblock set up by the Syrian deterrence forces in a crowded area where the offices of the [Palestinian] organizations are located. Nobody from these organizations interfered when the shots were heard and neither did the elements of the deterrence forces roadblock interfere to pursue the perpetrators. The instructions were strict:

"No intervention due to higher considerations."

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